State Government of Assam during 2001-2002. The State Government has not yet reported any expenditure out of these releases.

FDI in Print Media

*306. DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY:
SHRI MOOLCHAND MEENA:

Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether the recent decision of Government to allow foreign direct investment in the print media has generated interest in Germany;

(b) whether there has been any offer from Germany on FDI in print media;

(c) if so, the reaction of Government thereto;

(d) whether any proposals in this regard have been forwarded and suggested by Germany; and

(e) if so, by when a final decision in this regard is likely to be taken?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRIMATI SUSHMA SWARAJ): (a) to (e) The Government has not received any offer or proposal from Germany for granting permission for FDI in News/Current Affairs or Scientific/Technical/Speciality Journals.

Amendment to Pre-Natal Diagnostic Techniques Act, 1994

*307. SHRI P. PRABHAKAR REDDY: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government propose to amend the Pre-Natal Diagnostic Techniques Act, 1994;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor; and

(c) whether the view points of Delhi Medical Association and Medical Lawyers were sought for and considered before approving the amendments and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI SHATRUGHAN SINHA): (a) to (c) A Bill to amend the Pre-Natal

Diagnostic Techniques (Regulation and Prevention of Misuse) Act, 1994 has already been introduced in the Rajya Sabha. The amendments proposed mainly relate to bringing under the purview of the Act:

1. The techniques of pre-conception sex selection (such as separation of sperms carrying 'XX' and 'XY' chromosomes, Pre-implantation Genetic Diagnosis (PGD) or in-vitro fertilisation) to pre-empt the use of such technologies from misuse that could contribute to female foeticide;

2. More explicitly the use of ultrasound machines that are being misused for detection and disclosure of sex of the foetus;

3. The establishment of a State Level Supervisory Board for a more effective monitoring the implementation of the Act and to also further empower the Central Supervisory Board for—

   (i) advising Government on policy matter relating to sex selection techniques and their misuse;

   (ii) monitoring the implementation of the Act;

   (iii) creating public awareness against the practice of sex selection before conception; and

   (iv) overseeing the performance of various bodies constituted under the Act and taking appropriate steps to ensure proper and effective implementation of the Act;

4. The constitution of multi member State Appropriate Authority;

5. Stringent punishments;

6. Empowering the Appropriate Authorities for search, seizure and sealing of the machines, equipments and records of the violators of law including sealing of premises and commissioning of witnesses;

7. Making mandatory the maintenance of records in respect of the use of ultrasound machines and other equipments capable of detection of sex of foetus;

8. Ensuring sale of ultrasound machines only to the bodies registered under the Act; and

9. Reducing the period for filing complaints in the Court from 30 to 15 days.

Before finalizing the Amendment Bill, the amendments to the said Act were considered by the Technical Sub-Committee of the Central Supervisory Board constituted under the said Act in its meetings held on 26.5.2001, 9.6.2001 and 14.8.2001, keeping in view the emerging technologies which enable sex selection even before conception, difficulties experienced in the implementation of the Act, the representations received from professional organizations such as the Indian Medical Association, Human Rights Law Network, social activists and various other stakeholders.

Upgradation of Health Centres in Rajasthan

*308. SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether primary and secondary medical centres in Rajasthan are equipped and able to tackle the threat of plague or other epidemics in future;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, whether Government would consider upgrading these health centres enabling them to fight any epidemic in the initial stages?

THE MINISTER OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI SHATRUGHAN SINHA): (a) to (c) No case of plague has been reported from the State of Rajasthan. For other diseases, like Cholera, Typhoid and Hepatitis etc., the Medical Colleges in the State are fully equipped for diagnosis. C.D. Alert published by National Institute of Communicable Diseases, Delhi is also circulated to all the States for their guidance.

Further, seven districts of Rajasthan, *i.e.* (1) Alwar, (2) Jodhpur, (3) Udaipur, (4) Ajmer, (5) Kota, (6) Sikar and (7) Sirohi have been covered under the National Surveillance Programme for Communicable Diseases (NSPCD) whose object is to generate early warning signals regarding outbreak of epidemic prone diseases and response through capacity building, laboratory strengthening etc.